

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A steering wheel arrangement comprising:
a steering wheel having a first gear element; and
a second gear element mounted on or mountable on a steering column₁; ~~the~~
said first and second gear elements inter-engaging one another₁[[;]] the arrangement
further comprising at least one anti-backlash gear mounted directly on one of said gear
elements, ~~the or each~~ said at least one anti-backlash gear having teeth configured so as
to align substantially with the teeth of said gear element upon which it is mounted, ~~the~~
said at least one anti-backlash gear being rotatably biased[[,.]] relative to ~~the~~ said gear
element upon which it is mounted[[,.]] towards a position in which the said teeth of the
said at least one anti-backlash gear are displaced from the said corresponding teeth of
~~the~~ said gear element, wherein said at least one anti-backlash gear is held in position by
a retaining washer.
2. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The steering wheel arrangement according to
claim 1, wherein two ~~said~~ anti-backlash gears are mounted on said gear element, the
said two anti-backlash gears ~~being~~ are biased in opposite directions.

3. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The steering wheel arrangement according to claim 1, wherein said gear element on which ~~the~~ said one or each anti-backlash gear is mounted is a ring gear.

4. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The steering wheel arrangement according to claim 1, wherein said gear element on which ~~the~~ said one or each anti-backlash gear is mounted is a pinion gear.

5. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The steering wheel arrangement according to claim 4, wherein ~~the~~ said pinion gear is provided with two anti-backlash gears, ~~the~~ said anti-backlash gears each being in the form of a plate, each said plate having an aperture therein, ~~the~~ said aperture defining portions to engage spring elements, ~~the~~ said apertures of ~~the~~ said two anti-backlash gears being coaligned and receiving said spring elements.

6. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The steering wheel arrangement according to claim 5, wherein ~~each~~ said spring elements ~~[[is]]~~ are of substantially "C" shape, each spring element passing through part of ~~the~~ said aperture in one said plate which engages ~~the~~ said spring element, and part of ~~the~~ said aperture in ~~the~~ said other spring plate which accommodates ~~the~~ said spring element.

7. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The steering wheel arrangement according to claim 6, wherein said part of ~~the~~ said aperture that engages ~~the~~ said spring element is

an outwardly directed part of the said aperture that is bifurcated and has two arcuate slots, each said slot receiving part of the said spring element, and the said part of the said aperture that accommodates the said spring element, is of a generally arcuate outwardly directed part part of the a periphery of the said aperture.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A steering wheel arrangement comprising:

a steering wheel having a first gear element; and

a second gear element mounted on or mountable on a steering column, wherein ~~[[;]]~~ one of said gear elements ~~being~~ is a pinion gear; ~~the~~ said first and second gear elements inter-engaging one another; the arrangement further comprising:

two antibacklash gears mounted on one of said gear elements, ~~with the~~

wherein said gear element on which ~~the~~ said anti-backlash gears are mounted ~~being a~~ is said pinion gear, each said antibacklash gear having teeth configured so as to align substantially with ~~the~~ teeth of said gear element upon which it is mounted, ~~the~~

wherein said anti-backlash gear ~~being~~ is rotatably biased~~[[,]]~~ relative to ~~the~~ said gear element upon which it is mounted~~[[,]]~~ towards a position in which ~~the~~ said teeth of ~~the~~ said anti-backlash gear are displaced from ~~the~~ said corresponding teeth of ~~the~~ said gear element, ~~the~~

wherein said anti-backlash gears each being in the form of a plate, each said plate having an aperture therein, ~~the~~ said aperture defining portions to engage spring elements, ~~the~~

wherein said apertures of ~~the~~ said two anti-backlash gears ~~being~~ are co-aligned and for receiving said spring elements of substantially "C" shape, each said spring element passing through part of ~~the~~ said aperture in one plate which engages ~~the~~ said spring element and part of ~~the~~ said aperture in ~~the~~ said other ~~spring~~ plate which accommodates ~~the~~ said spring element, ~~the~~

wherein said part of the said aperture that engages the said spring element ~~being~~ is an outwardly directed part of the said aperture that is bifurcated and has two arcuate slots, each said slot receiving part of the said spring element, and the ~~part~~

wherein said part of the said aperture that accommodates the said spring element ~~being~~ is of a generally arcuate outwardly directed part of the said periphery of the said aperture.

10. (NEW) A steering wheel arrangement comprising:
a steering wheel defining a first gear;
a steering column defining a second gear meshing with said first gear;
two anti-backlash gears directly mounted on one of said first gear and said second gear; and

a plurality of spring elements for joining said two anti-backlash gears to said one of said first gear and said second gear, wherein said two anti-backlash gears are rotatably biased relative to each other and to said one of said first gear and said second gear, wherein one of said two anti-backlash gears engages a first face of a tooth of another of said first gear and said second gear, and another of said two anti-backlash gears engages a first face of another tooth of said another of said first gear and said second gear.

11. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 10, wherein said first gear is secured to said steering wheel.

12. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 10, wherein said second gear is secured to said steering column.

13. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 10, wherein said two anti-backlash gears are identically configured.

14. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 13, wherein said identically configured anti-backlash gears are inverted with respect to one another.

15. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 10, wherein said plurality of spring elements are formed from a sheet spring material in a substantially "C" shape.

16. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 15, wherein at least one of said plurality of spring elements extends through a first aperture in said one of said two anti-backlash gears and through a second aperture in said another of said two anti-backlash gears.

17. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 16, wherein said first aperture is an arcuate shape and said second aperture is a bifurcated shape, said at least one of said plurality of spring elements including ends extending into said bifurcated shape.

18. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 16, wherein said first aperture is a bifurcated shape and said second aperture is an arcuate shape, said at least one of said plurality of spring elements including ends extending into said bifurcated shape.

19. (NEW) The steering wheel arrangement of Claim 10, further comprising a washer having a collar, said collar securing said washer to said one of said first gear and said second gear.